Fisher Midgett

Ms. Mount

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Old Man and the Sea Essay

The theme of a novel is very important to understanding the overall message that the author is trying to convey throughout the story. The theme also gives the reader a main focal point to reflect back on after they have finished the book. The themes to remember are the overall themes of the novel.

One main theme of the Old Man in the Sea is the theme of pride. A heroic man like Santiago should have a lot of pride and he shows this as he reflects back on his younger days, when he caught all of the fish in his life. It is apparent too how Santiago’s pride forces him to follow the marlin far out to sea in order to catch him. During the great battle Santiago find the marlin a very worthy opponent and even calls the marlin his brother. This also shows how much respect Santiago had for the great fish. Santiago tells also of him having to kill the fish for pride, as to regain his pride for catching great fish as he used to. Santiago’s pride tells a lot about how the author intended him to be in the story. Santiago’s pride also makes him very sad as he has no weapons in the end of the story, and the sharks take all of the fish, except bones. His pride even makes him wish that he had never caught the fish, as to spare the fishes life. But, Santiago realizes what he has already done and is content that he had caught the great fish. A symbol that shows this is the bird that lands on Santiago’s boat while he is battling the mighty fish. The bird is tired after flying a long ways and rests on his boat but later flies right on. The bird represents Santiago’s determination and strength and makes Santiago keep going in his battle with the fish.

Another theme in the Old Man and the Sea is the theme of success. Success can be measured in many different ways in The Old Man and the Sea. One way success is measured is by how much Santiago catches. Santiago did not catch any fish at all for 84 days, but then he catches a very large fish on the 87th day of fishing. Santiago was very grateful for the success of the last day of fishing, but sad as he could not bring the fish in whole. Other people back at the village still may not have called it success though, as Santiago made no money. This shows the different ways that success can be seen as. Another way that success is measured is how you have done throughout your life. Santiago told many times of how much success he had in catching fish in his life. He told how he used to catch lots of fish and big fish too. To me this makes him look like a master at fishing, and I know he has had years of experience. I am sure this is what the people of his town thought, too, and were always very respectful to him. Success has given Santiago recognition for all that he had caught in the past, but when he caught the big fish he received little recognition. For example, the tourists didn’t even know what the fish was and they thought the fish was a shark. No one really got the word out of the big fish for Santiago to get recognition. One symbol relating to this is how Manolin and Santiago say the same thing every morning to get ready for fishing. They use things such as “get the cast net”, when there is no cast net. Manolin knows that the recreation gives Santiago a sense of hope every day that he will have success.

The Old Man in the Sea is a very good novel that I would request any student to read. The main themes of the novel are Success and Pride; both of which Santiago has. The theme of a novel is very important to understanding the overall message that the author is trying to convey throughout the story.